

May 12, 1989

DRAFT

Edward N. Brandt, Jr., M.D., Ph.D.
Chairman, Board of Regents of the National Library of Medicine
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Dear Dr. Brandt:

It is my pleasure to transmit to you and to the members of the NLM Board of Regents the final report of the Planning Panel on Outreach. The report's title, "Improving Health Professionals' Access to Information: Challenges and Opportunities for the National Library of Medicine," is meant to convey our intent that the recommendations contained within, when incorporated in the Long Range Plan of the National Library of Medicine, will help ensure that every American health professional has access to and can make optimal use of the vast information resources available from the NLM. A penultimate version of the report has been reviewed by the full panel membership; their comments are reflected herein.

The report sets forth the panel's major findings in four categories, each followed by pertinent recommendations along with estimated budget requirements for FY 1990-1994:

- The need to strengthen the highly successful Regional Medical Library Network and to forge a new relationship between its 3,000 institutional members and the National Library of Medicine. Library sources within the Network should continue to be improved and staffs of member institutions should be trained to use NLM's databases and other electronic information systems and to spread the use of these systems among users. The Network should act as a "field force" in bringing NLM's products and services to the individual health professional, and providing feedback from health professionals to NLM.
- The need for the NLM to expand its program of direct "access" grants to community-based health institutions to enable them to connect electronically to national information sources. Similarly, NLM should widen its support of IAIMS--Integrated Academic Information Management Systems--an ambitious program to integrate and manage the wide variety of computerized medical information sources found in large academic medical institutions.
- The need for NLM to expand its grant support for training, fellowships, and demonstration projects. These programs aim to supply the critical need for community-based health professionals who are skilled in the use of modern information systems.
- The need for NLM to continue to improve its current information products and services and to develop new products and services in a formal research and development process. These developments should be based on continuous feedback from users and on studies of user needs.

The report concludes with a summary resource table detailing the additional \$26 million required in FY 1990, and the increased staff resources required to carry out the panel's recommendations.

It has been an honor to chair the Outreach Panel. The 31 men and women who served with me share a common belief that the services of the NLM, indispensable as they are, can make an even greater contribution to medical research and to health care delivery. The key is to ensure that the Library's services are known to and used by health care professionals all over the Nation.

Sincerely,

Michael E. DeBakey, M.D.
Chairman, NLM Outreach Planning Panel

cc: NLM Board of Regents
Outreach Planning Panel
Director, NLM